



Rockport Millbrook Meadow Committee

P.O. Box 51, Rockport, MA 01966

www.millbrookmeadow.org

Charmaine Blanchard Laura Hallowell Shannon Mason, Vice Chair Barbara Sparks Stephanie Woolf Samuel W. Coulbourn, Chair Marcia Lombardo, Treasurer Aileen Morrissey Frederick H. Tarr III

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday, March 9th, 2016 Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library

7:00 p.m. Chairman Sam Coulbourn called the meeting to order. Members present: Shannon Mason, Barbara Sparks, Charmaine Blanchard, Aileen Morrissey, Laura Hallowell, Marcia Lombardo, and Stephanie Woolf. Also present were Gunilla Caulfield and Eric Hutchins, Advisors to the RMMC. Ted Tarr was absent.

1. Public input. Sam reported how a duck from Mill Pond had flown into a window of his house and died, after smashing glass and grain all over the inside of his house. Eric noted that there is too much "artificial feeding" of ducks at the Mill Pond. Because of all the feeding, more ducks live there than the environment can sustain. It's bad for the ducks, other animals, and because of the overload of fecal material, and increased contamination, bad for people. Members discussed putting up signs that warn visitors not to feed the wildlife.

2. Committee Business.

Treasurer's Report. Marcia reported that balance in operating account is \$892.12; balance in restoration funds from the Lura Hall Phillips Trust is \$125,002.55. However, she reported that she is having difficulty obtaining an updated account from DPW. Sam will talk with the Director.

Approve Minutes of Feb. 10th, 2016. Shannon moved to approve minutes, Stephanie seconded. All voted to approve.

3. Update status of Millbrook Meadow Restoration

Status of restoration. Barbara reported that DPW, in an effort to find a way to do the dredging with the funds (\$350,000) that may become available at Special Town Meeting April 2, 2016, has obtained two scenarios from Milone and MacBroom (MMI). Both

limit area dredged to that which can be done without crossing a permitting threshold, 5000 sq. ft.

One would dredge about two feet of sediment (3375 tons), which would cost an estimated total of \$550,000.

Another would dredge about three feet of sediment (3930 tons) and would cost an estimated \$600,000.

The earlier estimate MMI had provided would dredge **4650 tons** and cost an estimated **\$665,000**. Although the tonnage dredged varies significantly, most costs are fixed, as they are associated with building roads to access the Pond, and protection from contamination. Barbara suggested that "settling" for a lesser amount of dredging would be unwise.

Barbara and her liaison team will discuss this further with DPW and MMI on March 10th. The first Conservation Commmission hearing is scheduled for April 9.

4. Status of dredging project for Frog Pond. Barbara reported that DPW had been unable to stop the flow of water into the Frog Pond and so aquatic plants were removed, but it was not dredged. The small pond now is about 1.5 ft. deep. There is no time to try dredging again this spring because the smelt will start to run soon, Eric said. It will probably be more practical to do the dredging when the Mill Brook is diverted. However, the Frog Pond looks much nicer than it has for years.



- **5. Spending the Donated Funds.** Barbara asked the Committee what members thought about spending the some \$93,000 we have collected from private donations if it should be required to make dredging possible. Members noted that Lura Hall Phillips' Trust is being consumed now, and there is always a danger that town meeting may lose interest in this project before we restore Millbrook Meadow. We need to save that money, and add to it, for completing the Meadow, they agreed. Eric suggested that there should be an agreed-upon policy for such disbursement. Shannon had checked with ECCF about their policy for disbursements. It is recommended that at least two of the three ECCF Advisory Committee Members specified in our contract authorize payment from the fund. The Advisors are Sam, Shannon, and Marcia.
- **6. Pruning Trees and Removing Invasive Plants.** Laura reported on the project to prune trees, on a contract with David Adams. She also said that Polatin is poised to do a second round of treatment of phragmites, knotweed, bishop's weed and other species,

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probably this fall. She and a team of volunteers, including Mary Mintz and Shannon will work on clearing invasives from the Dogwood thicket on March 12th. Laura asked the Committee if they objected to the idea of covering up areas that are being treated with landscape fabric topped with wood chips over several years to suppress bishop's weed. There was no objection, although Barbara encouraged taking a more pro-active approach.

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7. Fundraising Sub-Committee, Publicity and Community Outreach. Shannon reported results of the Feb. 23rd meeting of the Fund Raising Subcommittee. They have decided upon another MailChimp email blast to get people to attend the April 2nd Special Town Meeting and support our CPC allocation.

The FR subcommittee is also looking at ways we can "package" parts of the restoration in order to attract larger donations from individuals. Shannon noted that Betsy Giannoccaro had pointed out that the Conservancy does not have a "presence" around town in terms of brochures or posters that tell our story. We will work on getting posters up. Aileen reported that Scott (her husband) is at work now on building the kiosk, so that should help in keeping the public informed about the Meadow.

In terms of outreach, Barbara urged members to ask friends to contact Ruth George re CPC FY2016 allocation for the dredging. Letters of support are a required part of the application. Barbara has emailed the chairs of boards, committees, and commissions asking for letters. Eric suggested that it is better for the letters to trickle in from individuals rather than have us deliver a stack of them.

Laura suggested that we should send in letters to the editor of the Gloucester Daily Times.

8. Earth Day Cleanup. Shannon asked about setting a date for spring cleanup of the Meadow. Members agreed on Saturday, April 23rd, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

9. New Business

Sam reported that Deborah Cowan has found that her Garden Club responsibilities make it too difficult to devote time to the Meadow Conservancy, so she is resigning. Shannon said that we would miss her on the Fund Raising subcommittee.

Stephanie will be unable to be a part of the DPW Liaison team because of her day job. When Barbara departs the liaison duties will be assumed by Laura, Shannon and Sam. Laura asked the Committee about lighting planned for the Meadow. She noted that abutter Marty Ross wanted a dark Meadow. Members were generally supportive of low key, full-cutoff lighting in the Meadow. No floodlights or bright lights. As to the Pond, should there be lights that can illuminate the Pond for nighttime skating? To be discussed.

Eric suggested that if dredging is planned for October 2016 it may be better to relocate turtles this summer.

- 10. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 13th, 2016, at Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library.
- **11. Adjournment:** Shannon moved and Charmaine seconded. All voted to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Approved:	
Samuel W. Coulbourn	
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Copy to: Town Administrator; Director of Public Works; Conservancy Board and Advisors; Conservation Agent; DPW Commissioners